

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Coeur d'Alene Field Office
3815 Schreiber Way
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83815

DECISION RECORD
Lynch Gulch Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-ID-C010-2015-0004-EA

1. Background

The forest vegetation on BLM land in the Lynch Gulch area south of the town of Pinehurst, in Shoshone County Idaho, is overstocked with numerous understory trees. These overstocked understory trees threaten the large overstory ponderosa pine, white pine, and western larch with fire by providing a way, or “ladder fuels,” for a ground fire to reach the crowns of the overstory trees. The combination of the overstocked understory and scattered dead lodgepole pine and dead fir trees infected with root rot also creates a fire hazard to the wildland urban interface (WUI) with the town of Pinehurst.

2. Decision

It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action, described in the environmental assessment cited above, authorizing the following actions;

- Construct approximately one mile of permanent roads and construct approximately one and a half miles of temporary road which would be decommissioned at the end of the project;
- Decommission approximately one and a half miles of existing roads;
- Thin the forest by harvesting trees located on 746 acres of forested land, which could produce about 4 million board feet of timber;
- Conserve old ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir trees located on southern aspects by thinning understory fir and pine trees;
- Conserve old western white pine, old western redcedar, dominant overstory western larch and Engelmann spruce trees located on northern aspects by thinning understory trees;
- Conserve all active raptor nests with a 100 yard buffer;
- Establish a 2.3 mile long shaded fuelbreak along the Bobby Anderson Ridge to aid in future fire suppression efforts;
- Restore fire adapted ecosystems and reduce hazardous fuels by prescribed burning on 520 acres;
- Restore forest stands to historic species composition by planting disease resistant western white pine and western larch seedlings in openings created by logging or prescribed burning on the wet/warm vegetative cover types, and by planting ponderosa pine seedlings in openings created by logging or prescribed burning on the dry conifer vegetation cover type;
- Implement hazardous fuels monitoring on treatment units;
- Implement wild fire effectiveness monitoring of the project.

3. Authority

The field office manager has the authority to sell timber located on lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management in accordance with 43 CFR 5000.

4. Rationale

The proposed action would create a landscape that is more resilient to wildland fire and protect the urban interface. The decision is in conformance with the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan and was analyzed in detail in EA number DOI-BLM-ID-C010-2015-0004-EA. The proposed action would cause no significant impacts to the environment, as documented in the Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI). The proposed action would create an environment that will improve the health of the forest by thinning understory trees, conserving old trees and the ponderosa pine forest will be revitalized by prescribed burning.

5. Public Involvement

Local residents who live within the project area and interested parties received written notification about the proposed action. The BLM also published information about the proposed action on a project website. The public comment period extended from 5/11/2015 to 6/12/2015. During the comment period one comment was received expressing concerns over motorized vehicle use, the need for a shaded fuel break on Bobby Anderson ridge and protecting riparian conservation areas. These issues are addressed in the environmental assessment.

6. Coordination and Consultation

The project has been coordinated with the Shoshone County Commissioners, and the approved action will implement a project identified in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan for County of Shoshone, 2011 Revision.

7. Protest and Appeal

The decision described in this document is a forest management decision and is subject to protest by the public. In accordance with Forest Management Regulations at 43 CFR Subpart 5003 Administrative Remedies, protests of this decision may be filed with the authorized officer within 15 days of the publication date of the notice of decision/timber sale advertisement in the *Coeur d'Alene Press*, Coeur d'Alene, ID.

43 CFR § 5003.3 subsection (b) states: "Protests shall be filed with the authorized officer and shall contain a written statement of reasons for protesting the decision." This precludes the acceptance of electronic mail (email) or facsimile (fax) protests. Only written and signed hard copies of protests that are delivered to the following address will be accepted:

BLM Coeur d'Alene Field Office
ATTN: Field Manager
3815 Schrieber Way
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815

The protest must clearly and concisely state which portion or element of the decision is being protested and the reasons why the decision is believed to be in error.

43 CFR § 5003.3 subsection (c) states: “Protests received more than 15 days after the publication of the notice of decision or the notice of sale are not timely filed and shall not be considered.” Upon timely filing of a protest, the authorized officer shall reconsider the project decision to be implemented in light of the statement of reasons for the protest and other pertinent information available to him. The authorized officer shall, at the conclusion of the review, serve the protest decision in writing to the protesting party(ies). Upon denial of a protest, the authorized officer may proceed with the implementation of the decision as permitted by regulations at 5003.3(f).

If no protest is received by the close of business (5:00 p.m.) within 15 days after publication of the decision notice, this decision will become final. If a timely protest is received, the project decision will be reconsidered in light of the statement of reasons for the protest and other pertinent information available, and the authorized officer will issue a protest decision.

/s/

6/3/16

Kurt Pavlat
Field Manager

Date